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Running Head: Factors Inhibiting Personal Growth

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Abstract

Special education students are increasingly being mainstreamed into regular education settings, adding to the academic diversity teachers face in their classrooms today. This diversity increases the demands placed on teachers. As such demands occur, teacher professional growth is being challenged as a priority in terms of teacher time and energy.

This study seeks to identify the factors that inhibit personal growth in teaching as teachers work to meet the needs of all students in academically diverse groups of learners. To identify these factors, researchers worked collaboratively with 42 secondary science and social studies teachers. Cooperative Study Groups were formed to discuss questions related to professional growth in teaching.

Teachers identified many factors that inhibit their professional growth. Chief among these was the administrative structure and functioning of schools that give teachers little voice in allocating resources and little opportunity to work with other teachers and with administrators to tackle problems and accomplish common educational goals. Teachers are also discouraged by problems of poor student motivation to learn and by the growing incidence of personal problems among students having an impact on their functioning at school. It appears that the students coming into the schools today have changed more than the structure of schools has. Teachers seem to want to work together to address changing student learning needs, but schools have yet to address structural factors which prevent teachers from working together to do so.

Factors Inhibiting Personal Growth When Teaching Academically Diverse Classes

Introduction

Recent literature addressing school restructuring (e.g., Reynolds, Wang, & Walberg, 1987; Stainback & Stainback, 1984) and the Regular Education Initiative (REI) (Will, 1986) proposes that mildly handicapped special education students be served in regular education classrooms and that current special education resources be shifted to regular education. In a recent issue of the Journal of Learning Disabilities, Hallahan, Kauffman, Lloyd, and McKinney (1988), guest editors, presented seven articles criticizing the REI from various perspectives, the rationale being that REI proponents seemed to be presenting principles that possessed "face validity" but lacked empirical support. Some of these authors questioned schools' "readiness" for the REI's proposed changes (e.g., Kauffman, Gerber, & Semmel, 1988; McKinney & Hocutt, 1988) and suggested that the REI proponents seemed to be ignoring research on the needs of special education students (e.g., Keogh, 1988; Schumaker & Deshler, 1988).

Whether under the rubric of the REI or not, students with disabilities are increasingly being placed in general education settings for a major part of the school day (Lovitt, 1989). The presence of these students adds to the classroom diversity that regular education teachers typically encounter. Further, the diversity increases the demands on teachers to plan for individualized instruction as well as to make appropriate instructional accommodations to meet individual students' needs (Graden, Zins, & Curtis, 1988).

Given the increased diversity that regular education teachers are facing, the purpose of this study was to explore the factors that inhibit these teachers' growth. To provide a framework for the rationale of studying this area, the literature surrounding (a) teacher dissatisfaction and (b) teacher stress/burnout will be discussed below. A rationale for focusing on secondary school teachers will also be presented.

As noted by Cuban (1984) and Schumaker and Deshler (1988), curricular and structural features of secondary school settings pose unique challenges for teachers. Based on an analysis of classroom pedagogy in public schools, Cuban (1984) concluded that elementary and secondary schools differed markedly in (a) the complexity and amount of content students face, (b) the allocation of time for instruction, and (c) the external pressures imposed on secondary schools from outside sources. While elementary schools focus primarily on the mastery of basic skills, secondary schools emphasize acquisition of content information. The "Excellence in Education Movement" (e.g., Boyer, 1983; Carnegie Forum, 1986; Goodlad, 1984; Holmes Group, 1986; The National Commission on Excellence

in Education, 1983; Sizer, 1984) that gained popularity in the 1980s markedly increased expectations concerning the amount of content to be covered by secondary school teachers. As a result of "suggestions" emanating from these reports and studies, secondary school teachers are expected to be "content experts," a role that places added pressure on them for remaining current with regard to curricular content and the best teaching practices.

Further adding to the challenge of teaching at the secondary level, the amount of student contact time is significantly greater for secondary teachers than it is for elementary teachers. Elementary teachers spend about five hours each day with the same group of 25 students, whereas high school teachers see five groups of 25 or more different students for less than one hour per day. Thus the potential for flexibly adjusting instruction to meet individual needs, accommodate for absences, and provide additional assistance or adaptations is immeasurably more difficult in the secondary school (Schumaker & Deshler, 1988).

Conley, Bacharach, and Bauer (1989) argued that recent publications concerning educational reform have failed to address school organizational and work structures, specifically the "factors that prevent teachers from achieving their intrinsic goals in the workplace" (p. 59). With the exception of the "stress/dissatisfaction" literature, few studies have examined the relationship between individual teacher characteristics and work environments.

The teacher dissatisfaction/stress literature provides a long list of variables that seem to be demoralizing teachers and inhibiting their growth and degree of effectiveness with all students. These variables include (a) lack of recognition (e.g., low pay, no voice in decision-making; no opportunities for advancement); (b) role concerns (e.g., role overload, role ambiguity, role routinization); (c) class size and diversity; (d) administrator-teacher relations (e.g., poor supervision, lack of support, lack of materials and resources); (e) isolation (e.g., lack of collegial interaction and performance feedback); (f) increased academic and emotional needs of students; and (g) poor public image of teachers.

Summarizing factors related to recognition, Mac-Phail-Wilcox and Hyler (1985) suggested that teachers, like children, are treated in very standardized ways, with little or no attention to their developmental needs. For example, all teachers must report to work at roughly the same time each day and participate in the same staff development activities. Further, (a) salaries are based on lock-step schedules basically unrelated to performance, (b) decision participation beyond the classroom is constricted, (c) collegial interaction is limited, (d) recognition is infrequent, and (e) increased status, esteem, and pay are limited to the number of positions open in a given district.

Variables related to recognition include isolation, teacher-administrator relationships, and poor public image. Isolation has primarily been operationally defined as lack of opportunities to engage in collegial interactions. In surveying 365 K-12 teachers, Farber --(1984a) found that 25% of the sample rarely had contact with colleagues; 42% felt the rewarding colleague contact was frequent enough; and 61% noted that there was no sense of community in their school. As noted by McLaughlin, Pfeifer, Swanson-Owens, and Yee (1986), this isolation and lack of community result in perceptions of teaching as a job versus teaching as a profession. The lack of collegial support no doubt hampers teacher growth, given its importance as (a) a mediator of stress/burnout (Litt & Turk, 1985; Schwab, Jackson, & Schuler, 1986) and (b) a source of ideas about teaching (Kasten, 1984).

In reference to teacher-administrator relationships, Litt and Turk (1985) found that 291 high school teachers identified lack of feedback from supervisors and no control over relevant decisions as major sources of stress at the secondary level. Upon analyzing responses from 693 K-12 teachers, Farber (1984b) concluded that "administrators . . . are perceived by most teachers as contributing more to the problems that teachers face than to the help they need" (p. 31). In suburban schools, for example, the author found that 63% of the teachers indicated that they never or rarely felt supported and encouraged by their principals. In urban schools, 77% felt that they were never or rarely supported by their principals.

Farber's findings (1984b) also are not very encouraging. For example, in suburban and urban settings, respectively, 80% and 82% of the teachers indicated that they have never or only rarely felt satisfied with teachers' standing in society. Similarly, Hock (1988) surveyed 939 K-12 teachers and found that the public image of teachers was one of three "best predictors of psychological burnout" (p. 184).

Whereas seeing success with individual students presents teachers with the "psychic income" needed to keep them motivated, class size/composition and increased academic and emotional needs of students have often been cited in the literature as a source of dissatisfaction and stress. Based on interviews with 85 teachers (no demographic data reported), McLaughlin et al. (1986) found that "class size and the increased academic and emotional needs of students head the list as . . . [sources] of teacher dissatisfaction and concern" (p. 422). These same teachers noted that class size was even less important than class composition in keeping them from being successful. Similar findings were reported by Conley et al. (1989) in their study of teachers in 42 elementary and 45 secondary schools. At the secondary level, student learning and behavior problems were significant predictors of dissatisfaction. Turner (1987) compiled a list of problems in education, as viewed by

1,000 teachers who responded to a poll in a popular teaching magazine. Major concerns, with rankings of #3 and #4, respectively, were "teaching children who have behavior problems outside of the classroom (divorce, drugs, and so on)" and "working in overcrowded classrooms" (p. 60). Both concerns were cited by 34% of the respondents.

Role concerns (e.g., role overload, role ambiguity, role routinization) are often cited as major sources of dissatisfaction. Conley et al. (1989) found that at both the elementary and secondary levels, role ambiguity and routinization significantly predicted teacher dissatisfaction, accounting for 60% of the variance. Interestingly, role ambiguity alone accounted for 41% of the variance at the elementary school level and 55% of the variance at the secondary level. Similarly, in their study of 339 K-12 teachers, Schwab et al. (1986) found that when controlling for sex and age, role conflict accounted for most of the variance for the "emotional exhaustion" and "depersonalization" items of a burnout instrument (24% and 12%, respectively). These authors defined role conflict as the "simultaneous occurrence of two or more sets of inconsistent, expected role behaviors" (p. 16). Hawkins and Coker (1985) defined "role overload" as having too much work and too little time to complete it in. In their poll of teachers, Turner (1987) found that "finding time to accomplish all objectives" was the number one problem identified by teachers, followed by "having too many nonprofessional duties (lunch duty, paperwork, and so on)" (P. 60).

This body of literature clearly demonstrates that the work environment presents many obstacles to growth for teachers. The present study was undertaken to develop an understanding of the relationship between teacher characteristics and work environments as they affect teachers' perceptions of their effectiveness with students from academically diverse classrooms.

Method

Cooperative Study Group Methodology

To gain a better understanding of the complex nature of teacher growth at the secondary level, a dynamic approach to research, which involves a collaborative relationship between teachers and researchers, was conceptualized. This approach is consistent with the growing recognition by educational researchers and reformers that "improvements in educational quality . . . require working through teachers rather than around them" (Porter & Brophy, 1988, p. 74). It is also consistent with the spirit of educational reform recommendations made by such national research and advocacy groups as the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, the Coalition of Essential Schools, the National Network for Educational Renewal, and the Rand Center for the Study of the Teaching Profession. The cooperative approach is based on the following assumptions:

(a) the quality of instructional practices is greatly enhanced when teachers are allowed and encouraged to be collaborators in the research and development process; (b) teachers' knowledge about their content areas and about the students in their classrooms provides critical insights that can only be revealed over time; and (c) only teachers who want to change and desire to be active agents in the change process are likely to change.

A major vehicle for carrying out this research process was "Cooperative Study Groups." Cooperative Study Groups (CSGs) have served as the basis for identifying issues and barriers surrounding various teaching activities, including factors that inhibit growth. Termed "qualitative research," the methodology involves asking teachers to come together in small-group sessions to talk about their teaching-related experiences (positive and negative).

The remainder of this paper presents the methodology used to gather data, through the cooperative research process, about factors related to teaching students in academically diverse classes. In addition, the methodology used to gather information about factors inhibiting personal growth will be described.

Subjects

Cooperative research subjects. Prior to selecting teachers to participate in the study, an invitation to become involved in the cooperative research project (a 4-year ongoing commitment) was sent to 308 secondary social studies and science teachers. This number represented all teachers for these subjects in grades six through twelve in two school districts in eastern Kansas. The Cooperative Venture was described as an investigation to determine methods for planning and teaching academically diverse groups of students. Fifty-two teachers volunteered to participate in the initial creation of the CSGs. For 51 of the 52 teachers for whom demographic data was collected, 25 were men, and 26 were women. Their mean age was 46 years (range=31-63 years), and they had taught for an average of 20 years (range=1-36 years; SD: 8 years). Twenty-six of the teachers taught science and 25 taught social studies/history at the secondary level. Further, 20 were teaching at the junior high/middle-school level, and 31 were teaching at the high-school level. Four of the teachers held part-time positions (e.g., taught 1-3 classes per day), whereas the remaining teachers held full-time positions. The teachers were teaching an average of 4.66 classes per day with a total average student enrollment of 107. Participants averaged two class preparations per day (range=1 to 4) and had one class period for planning within the school day. They reported that an average of 5.7% of the students enrolled in their classes were students with learning disabilities (LD). This percentage represents an estimate by teachers and is not necessarily an accurate

representation of the number of students identified as LD according to state criteria. Additionally, the teachers reported that an average of 11% of their students could be considered at-risk for failure in school.

Personal Growth Study Subjects. To address the issues surrounding personal growth, 42 teachers participated in this study. Based upon knowledge gained from previous CSGs that middle school teachers felt uncomfortable when mixed with groups of high-school teachers, seven study groups were formed in which an attempt was made to group middle and high school teachers separately. This proved feasible for four groups: two high-school science groups (Ns=8 and 8), one high-school social studies group (N=8), and one group of six middle-school science teachers and one middle-school social studies teacher (N=7). The remaining three groups included one with two high-school and two middle-school social studies teachers (N=4), one with two middle-school social studies teachers and one high-school science teacher (N=3), and one with two middle-school social studies teachers, one middle-school science teacher and one high-school science teacher (N=4). Group assignment was based on geographic location and compatibility of after-school schedules. Participants were paid $10 at the end of the CSG for their participation.

Data Collection Format

All cooperative research groups. Prior to employing the CSG format with teachers volunteering to commit their time over several years, a methodology was created via (a) an extensive literature review of qualitative research, and (b) consultation with a nationally known expert in teacher research and growth (Dr. Christopher Clark at Michigan State University). The CSG methodology involves having a moderator ask predetermined questions centering around a theme (e.g., professional growth). Following presentation of the initial question, the moderator facilitates discussion among teachers and clarifies and summarizes their comments when needed. The moderator can also choose to ask follow-up questions where necessary. The rest of the research team consists of a note taker and a recorder assistant. The note taker's task is to capture the essence of the discussion, as well as to note nonverbal behaviors that could not be captured by a tape recorder (e.g., nodding head in agreement to another subject's response; interest shown in discussions). Within a week after a CSG, the note taker typed notes into a computer and listened to the audio tape of the discussion to ensure correct interpretation of comments. The recorder assistant's task was to tape the discussions, handle any paperwork generated by paper-and-pencil measures employed, and act as host/hostess for the group of teachers. The methodology resulted from a pilot study conducted with four teachers in a local school district that was not participating

in the Cooperative Research Process. Following the pilot study, the procedures for conducting the CSGs were expressed in writing. Three project staff members were trained as moderators. Additionally, six research assistants were trained as note takers and recorder assistants. The duties and responsibilities of note takers and recorder assistants were specified in writing.

Personal growth CSG. To address the issue of factors related to personal growth, each of the seven groups of teachers met once after school at a district administrative building. The following questions were posed to the groups:

1. What are the biggest factors related to promoting personal growth in teaching given the demands of teaching in the face of academic diversity?
2. What are the biggest factors related to inhibiting personal growth in teaching given the demands of teaching in the face of academic diversity?
3. What are the key characteristics of an effort that would effectively enhance your personal growth in teaching?
4. What are the characteristics of "good" collegiality?

Due to varying amounts of discussion in the groups, not all the questions could be addressed. All seven groups discussed the first two questions. The third question was addressed by five groups. Two groups did not address the third question. The fourth question was addressed by six groups and question four by all but one group.

Within a week after these meetings, audio tapes and raw notes were transcribed and entered into a computer. For each group, summary statements of responses to the CSG questions were compiled. These summary statements, termed "Member Checks," were presented to the groups at a future meeting. Teachers were asked to indicate for each item the degree to which the statement was true for them on a 7-point Likert-type scale (ranging from 1 -- "Strongly Agree" to 7 -- "Strongly Disagree"). Because six teachers met with a different group than the original one, they expressed their degree of agreement with summary statements generated in CSGs other than the one they had previously attended. Additionally, one set of Member Checks was not turned in.

Data Analysis Procedures.

The data derived from these meetings were analyzed using two methods: (a) a transcript evaluation process, and (b) a quantitative analysis of "Member Check" data. For the transcript evaluation, the audio tapes of the meeting, the notes from the research

assistant, and the moderator's notes were used to create a transcript of the meeting. These transcripts were used to interpret the meaning of items generated through the Member Check process and to identify themes and trends in the data that were not apparent from the Member Check results. The transcripts were read and major impressions were summarized by two independent readers who had participated in the CSG meetings. These impressions were synthesized, and a set of summary statements were generated.

The responses generated through the Member Check process were compiled through sorting and grouping. After all meetings had been held, the research staff put each of the teachers' listed responses on a card and identified major categories and subcategories for each question. Project staff then sorted the responses for each question into the categories and subcategories. In order to determine the reliability of the sorting, two additional researchers independently sorted all responses. Their card placements were compared item by item to the staff's original assignment of responses to categories and subcategories. In order to be scored as an agreement, a response had to be assigned to the same category and subcategory by both sorters. The number of agreements was divided by the number of agreements plus disagreements and multiplied by 100 to obtain the percentage of agreement.

Since the teachers had indicated on the Member Check forms their level of personal agreement with each item generated within their group in response to each question, it was possible to determine the relative agreement between the group-generated Member Check items and an individual teacher's viewpoint. Given the nature of the data -- Member Check items not being commensurate across groups -- a method of determining within-group agreement or the homogeneity of attitudes toward stated Member Check items within each group was attempted. An index of homogeneity was calculated for each respondent under each question by calculating the standard deviation of their responses and then taking the reciprocal of that value, or dividing one by the standard deviation. To determine the degree to which groups were in consensus on each question, the standard deviation of the homogeneity indexes for each respondent was calculated. This was done for each of the four questions.

The Member Check ratings also allowed calculation of the relative level of agreement of the teachers to the pooled items that the research staff had included in each of the subcategories. In order to obtain this level of agreement, the numerical ratings of all the items that were assigned to a specific subcategory were totaled and divided by the number of teachers who had ranked those items in that subcategory. Thus, those responses having an average rating close to "1" showed that the teachers agreed with the responses (e.g., it held personal meaning for them), whereas responses with average ratings closer to "7" showed

that the teachers did not agree with the response (e.g., it did not hold personal meaning for them).

Question 2 Results: What are the biggest factors related to inhibiting personal growth in teaching given the demands of teaching in the face of academic diversity?

As noted, all seven groups responded to the professional growth question asking them to indicate factors that inhibit growth when teaching academically diverse classes. The seven groups generated 101 different Member Check items. (Altogether, 128 items were produced, but 27 were duplicated across groups.) The 128 items were sorted into major categories and subcategories by two independent raters (r=.89 and r=.88). The two coefficients indicate the degree of agreement between each rater and the pre-existing placements made by the staff who developed the categorizing schemes. Twenty-eight of the items were placed in subcategories by raters. For example, "Kids not taught to do their best" was placed in both the "Student Attention, Motivation, Involvement in Learning" and "Student Beliefs, Attitudes, Goals, and Interests" (about self, teachers, education)" subcategories within one of the four major categories--"Student Issues."

Four major categories and 23 subcategories were developed for this question: (a) **System/Administrative Issues,** or items related to problems caused by support personnel (e.g., counselors scheduling students inappropriately), having to do nonteaching duties or teach in areas not trained, and work environment issues (e.g., class size, inadequate materials); (b) **Student-Centered Issues,** or items related to the characteristics, actions, or attitudes of students (e.g., motivation, absenteeism, attitude, personal problems); (c) **Instructional/Teacher Issues,** or items related to providing instruction in the face of diversity, managing time and resources, evaluating students, disciplining students, fatigue, and interacting with students; and (d) **Professional Issues,** or items related to professional treatment and recognition, inservice, and collegial relations.

As noted, two types of results are available for each CSG question: (a) Member Check results, and (b) Transcript Analysis results. The results of the Member Check process will be presented in terms of (a) the categories and subcategories of responses discussed, (b) the number of items included in each subcategory, (c) the number of groups discussing items related to the subcategory, and (d) the level of agreement of the teachers to the pooled items in each subcategory. The results of the transcript analysis will be presented as subjective conclusions based on the CSG process and members' responses to the content discussed within the CSG framework. These conclusions will be discussed

generally and in terms of the dynamics and focus of the discussions in each of the seven groups.

Member check analysis. Table 1 summarizes the Member Check information for the question: "What are the biggest factors related to inhibiting personal growth in teaching given the demands of teaching in the face of academic diversity?" The most frequently mentioned factors fell in the major category of "System/Administrative Issues." In all seven groups, teachers mentioned issues focusing on actions and communications by and among the various "school systems" (e.g., counselors, administrators) as inhibiting growth (22 of the 128 items for this subcategory). Also, in six of the seven groups, teachers mentioned not being treated as professionals and having to do too many "nonteaching" duties (e.g., hall monitoring, administrative paperwork) as factors inhibiting growth (nine of the 128 items).

"Student-Centered Issues" was the next major category containing the most frequently cited barriers to growth. In five of the seven groups, teachers indicated that issues related to student attention, motivation, and involvement in learning were factors inhibiting growth (13 of the 128 total items). Also, four of the seven groups identified problems dealing with students' beliefs, attitudes, goals, and interests concerning themselves and their education as impediments to personal growth (e.g., passivity, only in it for the grade). Indeed six of seven groups of teachers indicated that dealing with students' "personal" problems and lack of support at home were factors inhibiting growth for them.

The only other subcategory that generated items from the majority of the seven groups was "Time Constraints/Problems," contained under the major category "Instructional Issues." Seven of the 128 total items were generated by four of the seven groups. Complaints involved limited time to find and organize materials, interact with colleagues, plan, and provide timely feedback to students.

As indicated in Table 1, for the most part, teachers only moderately agreed that the items generated in response to this question applied to them (e.g., most of the mean item ratings fell between 2.5 and 3.5). For the Member Check Survey, a rating of "1" indicated that an item generated by a particular CSG was "Very True" for teachers in the group; a rating of "7" indicated that it was "Not True" for them.

Table 1

CSG Member Check Results for Question 2.2: Factors Inhibiting Personal Growth When Teaching Academically Diverse Classes

Response Categories/Subcategories	No. of Items	No. of Groups (N=7)	Mean Agreement Rating*
System/Administrative Issues			
Competing School Duties, Expectations, Responsibilities	9	5	2.34
School/Administrator/Department/Counselor/System Issues	22	7	2.80
Student Scheduling/Placement Problems	4	3	3.17
Teaching Environment/Classroom Conditions/Class Size	3	3	2.15
Teaching Assignments	1	1	4.20
Student Issues			
Competition with Extra-curricular Activities	2	2	3.15
Student Absenteeism	2	2	2.86
Student Attention, Motivation, Involvement in Learning	13	5	2.59
Student Beliefs, Attitudes, Goals, and Interests (about self, teachers, education)	6	4	2.86
Student Interactions/Relationships with Peers or Adults	3	3	2.13
Student Personal Problems and Family Support Problems	11	4	2.61
Instructional/Teacher Issues			
Discipline Issues	4	3	3.19
Meeting Demands of Student Diversity	3	2	4.16
Problems of Student Evaluation (grades, testing, etc.)	4	3	2.64
Teacher Accountability/Sense of Responsibility	4	2	3.50
Teacher Feelings of Despair/ Dissatisfaction/Fatigue	8	3	3.38
Teacher/Student Relationship	3	1	3.46
Time Constraints/Problems	7	4	2.49
Materials and Resources	6	2	2.30
Professional Issues			
Teacher Collegial/Collaborative Involvement	3	2	2.31
Certification/Mandatory Inservice	2	2	3.00
Not Being Treated as a Professional	5	2	2.59
Recognition and Compensation for Teachers	3	2	2.96

*(7 = Low Agreement; 1 = High Agreement)

Transcript analysis and descriptions of individual study groups. Group 1, containing eight high school social studies teachers, generated 25 of the 128 total items.

Three of the four major categories were represented as were eight of the 23 subcategories. The majority of the items came primarily from the "System/Administrative Issues" category (12 of the 25 total group items) Of major concern were factors relating to administrative decisions about teaching being made without teacher input and by administrators who were out of touch with the realities of the classroom. Briefly mentioned by these teachers were such factors as having too many nonteaching duties (e.g., excessive paperwork) and having students inappropriately assigned to their courses by counselors. The second most frequently mentioned category was "Professional Issues." Items seen as impeding growth in this area included (a) lack of collegial interactions, (b) lack of recognition and compensation, and (c) forced inservice. Several of the items for this category, as well as all four items from the "Instructional Issues" category, were identical to the "administrative" factors listed above (e.g., decisions made without teacher input). Interestingly, this group did not address "Student Issues," or items related to student attitudes and motivation.

Very little moderator involvement was necessary in this group, which generated a great deal of dialogue among teachers. Thus all group members specifically addressed the question. An analysis of response content for this group, via transcript review, supports the Member Check findings that "System/Administrative Issues" impeded personal growth for this group of teachers. Some of the comments included (a) administration not wanting to hear "negative" information, (b) no new teachers hired to bring life into the school, (c) decisions made by a top-heavy bureaucracy that is out of touch with the teaching profession, (d) no time to meet with colleagues during school, (e) having too many nonteaching duties, (f) feeling powerless because of no control over decisions, (g) feeling "turned off" by administration-forced inservice, and (h) counselors placing students without knowing them. The discussion expanded at times to address broader concerns. For example, teachers raised the issue that teacher unions "hide incompetent teachers." They also suggested that the public erroneously blames teachers for students' shortcomings and not students' parents.

Group 2, containing eight high-school science teachers, generated 14 of the 128 total items. Three of the four major categories were represented, as were eight of the 23 subcategories. As in Group 1, the majority of the items reflected "systems" issues. Six of the 14 items fell in the "System/Administrative Issues" category. Essentially, the items reflected teachers' feelings that their administration was weak and unresponsive to student and teacher needs (e.g., reorganization changes failing to address the impact on teachers, administrators not being responsive to students, materials allocated on the basis of test scores such that high test scores result in no new materials, poor teaching environment

resulting from having to rotate rooms, students scheduled into classes for "political" purposes to make the school look "good"). Although categorized under "Instructional Issues," six of the 14 items also reflected "systems" issues (e.g., lack of planning time to set up science labs and demonstrations, having to achieve excellence with fewer resources). Only two items were generated concerning "Student Issues." Teachers indicated that watching students fail because of lack of motivation and "competing" for students' time (due to extracurricular activities such as a job) impeded personal growth in teaching. No "Professional Issues" items were mentioned.

Moderator involvement in this group primarily took the form of summarizing statements made by teachers. All respondents addressed the question. As in Group 1, the transcript analysis closely paralleled the Member Check findings concerning the influence of "System/Administrative Issues" on professional growth. A secondary theme emerged concerning the frustration of having to compete with students' various activities (e.g., jobs, athletics). Teachers were frustrated with planning and having students not show up. They were also frustrated by the disorganization that results when students are pulled from the classroom for special services.

Group 3, containing two middle-school social studies teachers and two high-school social studies teachers, generated 17 of the 128 total items. Three of the four major categories were represented along with nine of the 23 subcategories. The majority of the items (10 of 17 total group items) fell in the "Student Issues" category. As factors impeding professional growth, teachers mentioned (a) lack of parental support, (b) lack of student attention, motivation, and involvement in learning, (c) student absenteeism, and (d) concerns about student beliefs, attitudes, goals and interests about themselves and their education. Six of the 17 total group items were in the "System/Administration Issues" category. These items dealt with (a) counselors being overwhelmed and not doing their job, (b) assignment to excessive nonteaching duties, and (c) teaching unfamiliar material due to having to switch teaching assignments. As in the second group, no items were generated related to "Professional Issues." Only one item was generated for the "Instructional Issues" category (lack of planning time).

There was also very little moderator involvement in this group. Teachers questioned each other and expanded upon comments made by colleagues, and all teachers answered the question. Several teachers specifically offered examples of practices they use to handle time constraints -- one of the factors identified as impeding growth. The predominant theme for this group was lack of parental support. Another topic involved a lack of academic emphasis in the schools, manifested by (a) absent students, and (b) kids being overextended by

involvement in extracurricular areas. A third theme centered around "systems" issues (e.g., inadequate time to plan, excessive paperwork, nonteaching duties).

Group 4, containing six middle-school science teachers and one middle-school social studies teacher, generated 18 of the 128 total items across all four major categories and 11 of the 23 subcategories. Items came primarily from the "Student Issues" category. Specific factors included (a) lack of parental support, (b) student passivity and motivation, and (c) student absenteeism. Four items were generated in the "Instructional Issues" category, reflecting (a) time constraints, (b) classroom diversity, and (c) students' lack of prerequisite skills. Two items each were generated for the "System/Administrative Issues" and "Professional Issues" category, reflecting lack of professional respect from others (e.g., grades changed by administrators without permission by the teacher who issued them, lack of adequate compensation).

Moderator involvement in this group predominantly took the form of summarizing statements made by teachers. All but one teacher specifically addressed the question. Consistent with Member Check results, the overriding impediment to growth was seen as lack of parental support and follow-up on recommendations. A secondary theme involved teachers' loss of authority and respect (e.g., grades changed without teacher consent). Participants also mentioned student factors that impede growth (e.g., lack of respect for rules and authority, manipulative and passive students, students not prepared for class, students with emotional problems.)

Group 5, containing eight high-school science teachers, generated 22 of the 128 total items across three of the four major categories and 11 of the 23 subcategories. Twenty of the 22 total group items were evenly divided between the "Student Issues" and "Instructional Issues" categories. The majority of the "student" items expressed concern over students' low motivation and poor attitude about learning. The "Instructional Issues" items reflected concerns with (a) student discipline, (b) teaching in academically diverse classes, (c) grading students, (d) teacher accountability and responsibility for "student problems," and (e) the teacher/student relationship (e.g., students being manipulative, students viewing the relationship as "one-way").

Moderator involvement primarily consisted of asking probing and clarifying questions. Teachers engaged in lengthy dialogue, and questioned each other about details. All but one teacher responded to the question. The predominant theme identified as impeding growth was "instructional" problems. For example, the teachers noted that when students see that there are lower expectations for learning disabled students in a class, they feel they themselves do not have to work as hard. Participants also expressed concerns that the gap between the low and high achievers widens across time, and that the responsibility they have

for trying to motivate students with varying abilities is sometimes overwhelming. Another predominant theme involved student passivity, including (a) low motivation, (b) only caring about grades and what is needed to just get by, and (c) seeming to require "gimmicks and fun" to stay interested.

Group 6, containing two junior-high social studies teachers and one high-school science teacher, generated 21 of the total 128 items across all four major categories and 11 of the 23 subcategories. The majority of the items fell in the "Instructional Issues" category. As factors impeding growth, teachers identified (a) feelings of despair and dissatisfaction over lack of control, dated equipment and materials, and fatigue, (b) time constraints and problems given heavy work loads, and (c) discipline issues (e.g., "police duties" in hallways). Seven of the 21 items were classified under "System/Administrative Issues," reflecting concerns about (a) lack of coordination within departments, (b) students being inappropriately placed, and (c) chaos caused by special education pullout programs. Some of the items from the "Instructional Issues" category were also placed in the "systems" category (e.g., items dealing with time constraints and student discipline). Few items were generated for the "Student Issues" and "Professional Issues" categories.

For this group, moderator involvement primarily involved summarizing and clarifying statements made by teachers. Teachers often expanded on comments by colleagues in the group or brought up related topics. The predominant factor inhibiting growth was seen as students having severe problems that teachers feel powerless to address, leading teachers to feelings of hopelessness. Another major theme centered around "administrative" or "systems" issues, including (a) too many responsibilities given time constraints, (b) lack of appropriate materials for learning disabled students, and (c) lack of department coordination and collegial interactions. Teachers also expressed concern over lack of support from parents and "other" school personnel (e.g., counselors).

Group 7, containing one junior-high science teacher, two junior-high social studies teachers, and one high-school science teacher generated 11 of the 128 total items across all four major categories and nine of the 23 subcategories. The 11 items were essentially evenly divided between "System/Administrative Issues," "Student Issues," and "Instructional Issues." Only one item was generated in the "Professional Issues" category. System/Administrative items included (a) excessive paperwork, (b) large classes, and (c) lack of administrative support with discipline problems, whereas "student" items included (a) low motivation, (b) poor attitude, and (c) lack of respect for peers and teachers. Finally, the "Instructional Issues" items were similar to the "Systems" items, but teachers also expressed frustration at having to grade learning disabled students.

Moderator involvement was primarily in the form of summarizing and clarifying statements. The four teachers engaged in a lot of dialogue, challenging and questioning each other. All teachers specifically addressed the question. The primary area identified as inhibiting growth concerned class size and diversity. Specifically, participants felt that classes were too large and "poorly mixed." A secondary theme involved a feeling that students perceived school as unimportant, thus resulting in a loss of authority and respect for teachers.

Within-group agreement results. Based on the indexes of homogeneity of attitudes toward listed Member Check items within each group, the groups can be divided into three categories: most consistent, moderately consistent, and nonconsistent. Table 2 lists the within-group agreement results for the seven groups. Values are to be interpreted in the same manner as standard deviations, that is, low values indicate less variation and more agreement, whereas high values indicate more variation and less agreement.

Table 2

Standard Deviations for Homogeneity Indexes for Cooperative Study Group Question 2.2

Group	Question 2
Group 1	33
Group 2	.59
Group 3	.13
Group 4	.46
Group 5	.40
Group 6	.37
Group 7	.17

Inspection of the statistics indicates that groups #1, 3, and 7 demonstrate the greatest degree of consensus, with low variability in members' indexes. Groups #4, 5 and 6 had moderate consensus while Group #2 was nonconsistent with the least degree of consensus.

Discussion

Engaging teachers in a Cooperative Research Process yielded a great deal of information about the factors promoting personal growth when working with students in academically diverse classrooms. Supplementing the quantitative data obtained from Member Check Surveys, analyses of transcripts provided a wealth of qualitative data (e.g.,

specific classroom examples, "strength" of statements) that offer a foundation for future research with teachers.

With few exceptions, the information from the Member Check Surveys and the transcript analyses yielded similar results about the factors inhibiting growth for teachers in this study. The majority of the items and most of the discussion time in the groups focused on issues related to the functions and interactions of the various systems that comprise the school. Factors that emerged as barriers to growth included (a) few opportunities for collegial interactions, (b) decisions made without teacher input (e.g., students inappropriately placed by counselors, grades changed by administrators without the assigning teacher's permission), (c) large and poorly mixed classes, and (d) lack of time and materials given instructional demands and administrative expectations (e.g., excessive nonteaching duties, little planning time for labs and demonstrations, loss of instructional time because of special education pull-out programs and various extracurricular activities, inadequate resources). Several student/family factors also were mentioned as barriers to growth, such as (a) lack of parental support, (b) low student attention, motivation, and interest levels, (c) excessive student absenteeism , and (d) emotional problems of students.

In general, these results are very consistent with the findings of researchers who have explored what teachers find dissatisfying and stressful from a traditional (survey or interview) research paradigm. Results will be discussed below as they relate to existing research.

System/Administrative Growth Inhibitors

Isolation. Teachers in the present study identified lack of opportunities to share information with colleagues and to become involved in the decision-making process at their school as barriers to personal and professional growth. These findings are consistent with existing research citing lack of opportunities for collegial interactions (Farber, 1984a; Kasten, 1984; Little, 1982) and decisions being made without teacher input (Conley et al., 1989; Kalekin-Fishman, 1986; Litt & Turk, 1985; McLaughlin et al., 1986; Schwab et al., 1986) as sources of dissatisfaction and stress. McLaughlin et al. (1986) found that these two conditions led to teachers feeling isolated and unrecognized as professionals. Further, in reference to collegiality, Farber (1984a) noted that 61% of his sample of 365 K-12 teachers felt that there was no sense of community in their schools; 25% of his sample reported that they rarely or never had contact with colleagues. This result is particularly unfortunate, given Kasten's (1984) finding that teachers consider informal discussions with colleagues as the "best" source for ideas about teaching.

One teacher in the present study stated the following concerning collaboration and collegiality in their school:

> We don't work together as teachers; it's just individual programs functioning side by side. I don't necessarily think it's the personality of the teachers. I think it's the structure of the school. The math teacher has nothing to do with me, the science teacher, the English teacher. We just simply exist in the same building, but we aren't working on any common goal or towards each other.

Referring to sharing ideas, another teacher reported that it "doesn't happen as often as it should in the lounge during a planning period" and that this lack of collegiality leads to missed empowerment opportunities. These findings suggest two likely scenarios that may be operating in our schools. First, teachers may have very good methods of working with academically diverse classes but never get an opportunity to share them. Second, teachers may be attempting to reach these students and, for lack of exposure to more "appropriate" methods, continue to grapple with less effective strategies.

In addition to lack of collegial interaction, a sense of isolation and despair also stems from not being involved in decision-making that has a direct impact on teaching. For example, a teacher in the present study stated that "decisions are being made for us by people who have not been in a classroom in 30 years," adding that the students are different from students in the past. Stating the problem more strongly, another teacher viewed the issue as a "classic management/labor dichotomy, front-line troops versus generals in the background that have lost combat experience." Another teacher added that "if you see your job in a labor/management kind of situation, you're not willing to do anything extra for fear you're giving something."

Related to limited involvement in decision-making, several of the groups pointed out that students are often inappropriately placed in classes, either by counselors who do not know the students well or by administrative decree for "political" reasons, as one teacher put it. Teachers in one school criticized an administrative decision that allowed freshmen to bypass introductory science and take biology in order to make the school "look good." Interestingly, and sadly, teachers seemed to be losing some of their already limited authority and respect. For example, several teachers reported that principals change grades and retain (or fail to retain) students without teachers' permission. One teacher commented: "We're losing authority. All teachers have known of grades that have been changed during the summer."

Class size and composition. Consistent with research identifying large class size (Kalekin-Fishman, 1986; McLaughlin et al., 1986; Turner, 1987) and very diverse classes (McLaughlin et al., 1986) as sources of teacher dissatisfaction, participants in the present study spent a great deal of discussion time on these two areas. For example, one teacher stated, "I have 31 students--15 LDs [learning disabled]--in one class. Surely, administrators are sharp enough to realize that that's bad." Another teacher said, "I felt that I and my class, when they numbered 24, were all set up for failure. When four kids dropped, I felt I had a group I could teach."

In reference to class composition, teachers in several groups expressed the frustrations and problems they experience when trying to modify curriculum and grading procedures on the basis of varied ability levels. One teacher reported that "students don't understand differences in expectations due to diversity. They assume that they are all going to be treated equally even though their skills and talents may be different." Another teacher reported that "in some . . . classes . . , any time a kid is put in the class and tagged LD, that student's performance becomes the entire upper limit for the rest of the class." The teacher added that other students take the following stance: "Why do I have to work hard? He'll get an 'A' for doing nothing."

Time and resource constraints. Another "systems" barrier to growth identified by teachers in this study involved time and resource limitations, given instructional demands and administrator's expectations. These findings are consistent with existing research, which has isolated time constraints (Litt & Turk, 1985; Turner, 1987), excessive paperwork (Hock, 1988; Turner, 1987), too many nonprofessional duties (Turner, 1987), and lack of appropriate resources (McLaughlin et al., 1986) as sources of frustration and dissatisfaction.

In reference to time problems stemming from "trying to get a curriculum to fit . . . all the differences in one classroom," one teacher in this study stated, "There's just not enough time. It's not fair to expect us to spend three to four hours at home." Another teacher, addressing loss of planning periods because of "extra duties," commented, "You're expected to do planning at home and still handle other groups, activities, and extra duties. It's presumed you don't need this time because you're an expert." A science teacher added, "I know it's a 'no-no' to say science takes more time, but it's true. You have to practice labs and demonstrations." In a related vein, teachers also commented on the loss of personal and instructional time due to excessive "administrative" paperwork and keeping up with grading students' papers. Teachers also pointed out that they do not have appropriate materials for

LD and other low-achieving students, and that finding appropriate materials takes time they do not have.

Student/Family Growth Inhibitors

Parent involvement. Consistent with research that has identified lack of parental involvement as a source of teacher dissatisfaction (e.g., Dedrick & Dishner, 1982; Turner, 1987), the participants in this study spent a great deal of time lamenting the fact that parents are not supportive of what the teachers are trying to accomplish. One teacher stated, "More frustrating now is the lack of parental support that you used to get. Now, if you contact the parents, you don't see anything happen." Another teacher added, "We'll set up consequences for [students] in a conference meeting [with parents], and they won't do it. They don't want to put up with a mad child." Referring to a parent's response to a colleague's phone call, a teacher reported that the parent had the following to say: "Don't call me about your problems at school. I don't call you when he gives me problems on the weekend."

Students' increased emotional problems. Teachers also discussed issues relating to increased emotional problems among students that they have to deal with. This finding is consistent with research that has identified student personal problems as an area of teacher dissatisfaction and stress (e.g., McLaughlin et al., 1986; Turner, 1987). For example, in interviews with 85 high school teachers, McLaughlin et al. (1986) found that the increased academic and emotional needs of students was second only to class size and composition as a source of stress and dissatisfaction. The authors were referring to the change in family structures due to single-parent and dual-career families. Unfortunately, teachers in the present study seemed to be discussing student problems of a much more serious nature, perhaps also stemming from changes in family structure. For example, one teacher talked about a girl in her class who had been sexually abused by a relative, stating that "she's been in and out of school. We aren't equipped to handle this." Another teacher stated the following:

> Many [students] have problems beyond my ability to deal with them on a routine basis. You feel overwhelmed by circumstances you know are well beyond your control. I have 15 to 18 more kids in that class, and you feel like the whole ship is going down.

Across groups, teachers also seemed to think that the problems are becoming more serious and are affecting a larger percentage of students. One teacher stated, "There are so

many good kids, which is why we go back, but a minority of them are having all kinds of problems, and that's becoming a larger percentage." Another teacher stated:

> I'm a lot older than my students, and I haven't run into the problems they have. We are going to get tons of these. We're going to look back and say these were the good old days.

These findings suggest that schools are not changing commensurate with the changes in students' needs, which is frustrating teachers. Since it seems logical to assume that students are going to continue to have emotional problems, perhaps we should consider staff development and training from a counseling skills approach.

Student absenteeism and lost instructional time. Excessive student absenteeism and loss of instructional time was also discussed at some length by teachers in this study, a finding also consistent with existing research identifying it as a source of teacher dissatisfaction (e.g., Dedrick & Dishner, 1982; McLaughlin et al., 1986). One teacher in this study stated, "I'm missing five kids every day. I'd say 50% of our kids don't complete a whole week." Another teacher added: "We must compete with all the students' other demands. They've got jobs, family problems, drug problems, and that's frustrating." Related to "system/administrative" barriers to growth mentioned earlier, teachers in this study identified "administrator-caused" loss of instructional time as inhibitors to growth. One teacher commented:

> What is frustrating [about taking away instructional time for homeroom, assemblies, athletics, etc.] . . . is that you have made great plans and half of the students aren't there, and you need to go over the material the next day, plus keep track of who missed what.

In relation to lost instructional time for special education students due to pull-out programs, another teacher said: "I support the LD program but not the pull-out aspect of it. I feel it handicaps the kids not being there half the time." Painting a bleak picture of our secondary schools today, another teacher said, "We're very social [in our schools, and] . . . kids come and go. We're socialization centers instead of learning centers."

Student passivity. Teachers in this study also identified low student motivation, attention, and interest levels as barriers to personal and professional teacher growth. This finding is consistent with existing research citing these areas as sources of teacher stress and dissatisfaction (Hock, 1988; Turner, 1987). The finding is also consistent with Sizer's

(1984) description of high school students as "docile, compliant, and without initiative" (p. 54). Similarly, high school teachers in Goodlad's (1983) study ranked "lack of student interest" and "lack of parental interest" as the two most important issues facing education today. As one teacher in our study groups stated, "the goal in every class, regardless of intelligence of students, is 'How can I make the grade and remain as ignorant as possible?'" Relating the frustration of working with these students, another teacher added that "many [students] have become passive; you want to take a two-by-four to get their attention."

Summary

This discussion of factors inhibiting teachers' personal and professional growth paints a grim picture of the working conditions of secondary school teachers. Teachers feel frustrated and powerless to deal with student/family factors beyond their control and seem to think that these problems are getting worse. They also feel that they are isolated, that they are not respected, and that they have limited authority. Despite having larger and more diverse classes and less resources than in the past, teachers in the present study feel pressured by administrators to produce successful students. Teachers continuing to work under these stressful and often unrewarding conditions are truly remarkable individuals. As one teacher put it, "It is worth it to provide the service for society." This idealistic attitude, however, may not continue to sustain teachers in the future.

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